

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

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NEA - A.L. ATHERTON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, GR, US

SUBJECT: AHEPA INVITATION TO KING CONSTANTINE

1. AMBASSADOR SOROKOS CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO AUGUST 2, TO DISCUSS INVITATION ISSUED TO KING CONSTANTINE BY MICHAEL SPIRTOS, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN HELLENIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION (AHEPA) TO BE PRINCIPAL SPEAKER AT THE ANNUAL AHEPA BANQUET ON AUGUST 23 IN HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA. ACCORDING TO SOROKOS, KING CONSTANTINE ACCEPTED THE INVITATION, DESPITE MESSAGE FROM THE AHEPA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY SAYING THAT THE INVITATION WAS NOT IN PROPER ORDER, SINCE SPIRTOS HAD NOT CONSULTED WITH THE AHEPA LEADERSHIP.

2. SOROKOS POINTED OUT THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ALWAYS AVOIDED INVOLVING ITSELF IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF GREEK ORGANIZATIONS ABROAD. THE AHEPA SUPREME LODGE HAS ASKED THE GREEK EMBASSY TO PERSUADE SPIRTOS TO RETRACT HIS INVITATION TO CONSTANTINE, BUT THE EMBASSY DOES NOT WANT TO INTERVENE. SINCE CONSTANTINE'S APPEARANCE WOULD DIVIDE THE GREEK-AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND CAUSE PROBLEMS THAT WOULD UNCLASSIFIED

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INEVITABLY AFFECT UNITED STATES-GREEK RELATIONS, SOROKOS

ASKED THE DEPARTMENT TO CONSIDER TWO ALTERNATIVES FOR ACTION:

(1 A) TO URGE AHEPA TO CANCEL THE INVITATION; OR

B) TO FIND A WAY TO ADVISE CONSTANTINE NOT TO COME. IN HIS VIEW, A FIRM STANCE BY THE DEPARTMENT NOW WOULD SAVE US MANY FUTURE DIFFICULTIES.

3. MR. SISCO APPRECIATED THE GOG POINT OF VIEW ON THE PROPOSED VISIT, BUT FELT THAT INTERVENTION WAS AT LEAST AS DELICATE A MATTER FOR US AS FOR THE GREEK EMBASSY. HE UNDERSTOOD THE INVITATION WAS STILL UNDER ACTIVE REVIEW WITHIN AHEPA AND MIGHT WELL BE RESOLVED AT THAT LEVEL. MR. SISCO SAID HE WOULD TAKE SOROKOS' SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION UNDER HIS ADVISEMENT, BUT AS A VISCERAL REACTION HE DID NOT SEE HOW WE COULD INTERVENE, AND HE COULD NOT BE ENCOURAGING IN THIS REGARD.

4. REGARDING SOROKOS' FIRST ALTERNATIVE, MR. SISCO SAID WE HAVE NEVER BECOME INVOLVED IN THIS KIND OF INTERNAL MATTER WITH ANY OF THE HUNDREDS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE FOREIGN AFFAIRS INTERESTS ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN MANY INSTANCES WHEN WE WERE PRESSED TO DO SO. HE DOUBTED THERE WOULD BE ANY LEGAL BASIS FOR OUR APPROACHING A PRIVATE AMERICAN ORGANIZATION. AS FOR THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE BEEN CALLED ON MANY TIMES TO INTERVENE WITH GOG ON BEHALF OF KING CONSTANTINE WE HAVE NEVER DONE SO, EVEN WHEN THERE WERE PRESSURES FROM THE OPPOSITION AND FROM CONGRESS. WE WOULD LIKE TO GO ON AVOIDING THIS KIND OF INVOLVEMENT, BUT EVEN IF THERE WERE A DECISION TO INTERVENE IN THIS CASE, IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER WE WOULD HAVE MUCH INFLUENCE WITH KING CONSTANTINE AT THIS POINT.

5. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT TIMING, SOROKOS SAID THE SUPREME LODGE WAS MEETING THIS WEEKEND TO REVIEW THE SITUATION. MR. SISCO COMMENTED THAT WE WERE NOT FACED WITH THE NEED TO MAKE A DECISION JUST YET. SOROKOS SAID HE REALIZED HOW DELICATE ANY KIND OF INTERVENTION WOULD BE

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FOR THE DEPARTMENT, BUT HE HOPED WE COULD AVERT A PROBLEM THAT COULD CAUSE BOTH COUNTRIES MANY DIFFICULTIES. ROGERS

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